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## Looking after the environment

Stewardship of the environment is the task of The Environment Agency in this country. This body is headed by a policy unit of about 250 people. The agency combines the regulation and management of land, air and water in England and Wales and provides protection and enhancement of the environment as a whole. The agency also has an overriding commitment to contribute to the worldwide environmental goal of sustainable development.

### Local environment

Did you know that the habitat around us is artificial? Before the arrival of man, the countryside was covered in oak forest.

Did you also know that around 80 percent of rare plant species in Suffolk are to be found around RAF Lakenheath?

It is important that we continue to manage our ever-changing environment. This is done in part by the management of existing sites.



### 'Go for Green' challenge

Earth Week seems the ideal opportunity to let you know about the recent initiative introduced by Forest Heath District Council in conjunction with the Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Brecks Countryside Project. It is the "Go for Green" challenge. The challenge flags up some great ideas of ways to get involved to enhance the environment in which we live. Base personnel are already involved in helping Forest Heath work toward their goal, but there are other projects being developed right now.

### Ideas for children to play a part



We are saving the planet for future generations, so it is never too early to get involved and do our bit to help. Suffolk Wildlife Trust have a number of ongoing projects which can help children appreciate and take a part in

preserving what we have.

### Pond dipping

Pond dipping is a way of finding out what is in the water around us. It shows us how healthy it is and how the ecology changes over time. Pond dipping, as well as giving vital information for its management, can be a fun task for children to do under supervision. Nick Gibbons from Suffolk Wildlife Trust is keen to carry out a site survey of Peacekeeper Park and is looking for some volunteers. This would be a great idea for a class project.



### Water vole watch

Water voles are the largest member of the British vole family. They used to be a common sight crouching at the water's edge but are now threatened with extinction in Great Britain. In addition to searching for voles, you will have the opportunity to learn about wildlife and see many other species, such as otters and American mink.

All you need to do to get started is to get a group together (never go alone or unsupervised) and complete a survey form for Nick at the Trust. If you are interested, I can provide you with the information required.

### Other projects

Next weekend, a group of Girls Scouts from the base will undertake a project at Maids Cross Hill, north of the base. They are going to pull seedlings of Scots pine so that too many trees are not competing for the same amount of soil.

Last week, about 50 cadets from the 3rd Air Force Airman Leadership School returned to Mildenhall cemetery to work alongside their British neighbours to finish work to clear the cemetery. Forest Heath District Council representative, Roger Goulding, commented that the work was completed in days rather than the months it would have taken with their small team of volunteers. He was



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absolutely delighted with the hard work and enthusiasm demonstrated by the whole team.

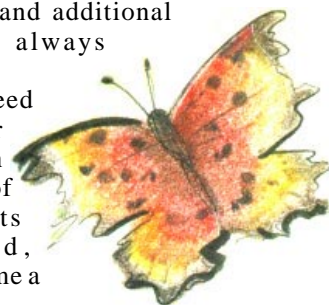
### Projects to be completed

Several of the schools in the local area are keen to create environmental projects, such as gardens with wild flowers, in their school grounds and need help with preparing ground and getting started.

### Brecks countryside project

The Brecks Countryside Project has been set up to look after the management of 370 square miles around the Suffolk/Norfolk county border. The area includes Santon Downham, Brandon, Beck Row, West Row, Worlington, Freckenham and Icklingham. The two areas of work currently being undertaken are concerned with wildlife conservation and improvements to public footpaths. Teams for projects are set up under the supervision of Simon Hooton or Neil Jarvis and additional help is always welcome.

If you need any further information about any of the projects mentioned, please give me a call.



## Linda's tip

The State Rooms at Buckingham Place will be open to the public 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Aug. 8 - Oct. 5. During the summer, opening tickets are available on the day or in advance, from 9 a.m. at the ticket office in Green Park. Day tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis with each ticket indicating a specific time to enter Buckingham Palace.